

HOUSE No. 2615

By Mr. Walsh of Boston, petition of Martin J. Walsh for legislation to establish a pilot program to provide access to health care and social services within the Executive Office of Health and Human Services. Public Health.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand and Five.

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PILOT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE COMMUNITY ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL SERVICES.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The executive office of health and human services
2 is hereby authorized and directed to establish a two year pilot pro-
3 gram to eliminate informational, cultural, ethnic, and social bar-
4 riers that keep people from using available health and social
5 services, and help citizens act to improve the health and safety of
6 communities. Said program shall initially be carried out at four
7 sites. Other sites may be designated if financially feasible. The
8 Codman Square Health Center shall operate one of the sites and
9 shall administer the program for the executive office. Said Cen-
10 ter's duties shall include:— selecting the other sites for the pilot
11 program, evaluating the possible sites on the basis of the capacity
12 of the organization that would operate the site and the needs of the
13 community the site would serve; developing appropriate training
14 curricula for community health advisors; and assisting the execu-
15 tive office in its evaluation of the program. Said program shall use
16 community health advisors to accomplish the purposes of the pro-
17 gram. A community health advisor shall be a person who lives in
18 the community in which he or she works; and is trained to provide
19 education and limited services in health care and social services
20 without formal licensing or certification as a health care or other
21 professional.

1 SECTION 2. Each site selected shall perform the following:—

2 A. Evaluate through a community-wide survey, the social and
3 health related needs of their communities; B. Conduct home visits
4 to families who are most in need of services and who voluntarily
5 consent to such visits; C. Link families and individuals to health
6 care and social services available to the community including, but
7 not limited to:- primary health care; mental health and counseling
8 services; dental care; HIV/AIDS services; substance abuse treat-
9 ment services; home health care; child care; food and nutrition
10 services; housing assistance; and transportation services; provide
11 follow-up services through any crisis situation or such other situa-
12 tions which may require follow-up action; establish a data system
13 to document the level of screening and assessment, profile the risk
14 and family demographics, and evaluate family outcomes; provide
15 case management for chronic conditions or in association with the
16 provision of preventive care for other diseases or unhealthy out-
17 comes; help to organize community groups that will help to edu-
18 cate policy makers about unmet health and social services needs
19 in the community and to suggest possible solutions; attempt to use
20 existing resources in the community by coordinating and collabo-
21 rating with other health care and social service organizations
22 employ community health advisors to provide these services and
23 shall also employ any necessary staff to support and manage the
24 program; and establish a training program for community health
25 advisors to develop the skills required to provide these services.

1 SECTION 3. Two years after the initial implementation of the
2 program, the executive office of health and human services shall
3 report to the general court on the operation and results of the pilot
4 program and shall recommend its expansion, continuation or dis-
5 continuation.